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Report of Pretesting Survey
on
The Meat Sharing Program

SUMMARY

Purpose: The purpose of this quick checking was:

1. To pretest the use of the neighborhood leader system in carrying the "Share the Meat" program to farm families.
2. To determine farm family attitudes toward the "Share the Meat" program.
3. To determine farm family attitudes toward the "Meat Rationing" program.

Method: In four counties of three States, New Jersey, Virginia and Maryland, 14 neighborhood leaders were trained on the why, what, and how of the meat sharing program. These leaders interviewed 30 farm families and explained the meat sharing program and discussed it with them. An extension worker accompanied each neighborhood leader on the interviews and made the observations.

Results: 1. The neighborhood leader system can be used successfully to inform farm families of the "Share the Meat" program. However, the application of the program to farm situations presents several difficulties. An incorrect approach might not only fail to secure desired reduction in meat consumption but might decrease the effort on the part of farmers to increase their production of meat and other essential foods.

2. Farm families are willing to share the meat but believe that meat rationing is essential for fair distribution. Very few are buying more than the $2\frac{1}{2}$ pound standard and these are willing to reduce purchased meat to this amount. Those buying less will not increase their purchases. Some of those who butcher their own meat believe the farmer should be allowed to eat what he raises himself.

3. Although favoring rationing, all families interviewed felt the people doing hard work (including farm work) should be allowed to have more meat than office workers. There was considerable difference of opinion concerning rationing farmers who butcher. All were concerned about how this would be done, and thought it would be very difficult.

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Observations

The Neighborhood Leader System and "Share the Meat" Program.

1. The neighborhood leaders did a reasonably good job of presenting the "Share the Meat" information considering the short time available for training and the tentative character of the information available relative to meat sharing and meat rationing.
2. Neighborhood leaders encountered and anticipate considerable difficulty in getting families who produce and butcher more meat than the $2\frac{1}{2}$ pound standard to reduce consumption, if they ask families to reduce consumption to $2\frac{1}{2}$ pounds per adult per week; because -
 - a. Some families do not (and probably will not) weigh the meat they butcher.
 - b. Farm families believe that people engaged in active physical work should have more meat than office workers.
 - c. Fear of losing hired men who like meat.
 - d. Buying fish or cheese as alternatives is more expensive than home production of meat and requires rationed gas to go to market to get it.
 - e. An attitude developed by years of educational work on "live-at-home" programs, that good farmers produce as much as possible of their own food.
3. Suggestions from neighborhood leaders and families interviewed on the nature of the share the meat program included:
 - a. Farm families should be encouraged to raise more meat and poultry for home use and should buy as little as possible from meat markets.
 - b. Farm families should be encouraged to produce and use more poultry, eggs, cheese, beans and peas as alternatives for meat. They should be given recipes for the preparation of meat alternatives.
4. The message neighborhood leaders give to farm families should include a short explanation of the reason for the program, things to do and recipes for stretching the meat and preparing alternative foods. Simple information should be given foreign homemakers and those of less education about the reason for the program. One or two things to do and recipes for alternative should be suggested.

5. The neighborhood leaders should be prepared for questions which the farm families raised.

- a. Will the "Share the Meat" and meat rationing programs reduce the price for the livestock they produce?
- b. Will farmers who raise and butcher for their own use be rationed? How can it be done?
- c. Shouldn't farmers be permitted to raise and butcher as much meat as they need?
- d. Will farmers be permitted to sell some of the meat they butcher?
- e. What will be done about this situation? At butchering time farmers have much fresh meat. They can some, but have sparribs, middlings, and other fresh meat in excess of the $2\frac{1}{2}$ pounds standard. They eat much meat for two or three weeks.
- f. Does rationing mean that farm families who store a great amount of meat, must put away less and keep within the $2\frac{1}{2}$ pound standard?
- g. Doesn't the rationing of farmers who raise and butcher their own meat really mean decreased meat production which is in conflict with the war program of increased meat production?
- h. Must farmers declare their meat on hand when rationing begins?
- i. Will pieces of pork included in cooking vegetables be counted in rationing?
- j. How will rationing apply to farmers who have hired hands and seasonal labor?
- k. How will company over weekends be taken care of?
- l. Shouldn't such things as age, kind of work and climatic conditions be considered in rationing allowances?
- m. What will be the result of meat rationing on prices of meat alternatives?
- n. If people save meat will the armed forces get it and will they use it economically?

6. Neighborhood leaders need more detailed training than it was possible to give on this pretesting survey. The information and instruction sheets should be simple so that the ideas and things to do stand out clearly.

Share the Meat Program:

7. Homemakers have heard over the radio and in the newspapers that meat will be scarce. Most of the farm families interviewed butcher. Those who buy meat have had trouble getting some meats - beef and bacon particularly.
8. Relatively few families were using more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ pounds of red meats per person per week. There was a tendency for the families above-average in socio-economic status to be using more than the $2\frac{1}{2}$ pounds standard.
9. Of the families who buy meat, many have already begun to reduce their red meat consumption and were using more poultry, fish and eggs. Some were having meatless days. Most of the families who produced their own meat, and who used more than the $2\frac{1}{2}$ pounds standard had not begun to reduce meat consumption. Those who raise and butcher a large meat supply for their own use expect to have difficulty in reducing. They felt it is cheaper for them to produce meat than to buy meat alternatives.
10. Insufficient knowledge about alternative foods indicates that the share the meat program is much more likely to be successful if alternatives and how to prepare them are emphasized.
11. Almost all families preferred government rationing of meat to voluntary sharing. Some felt that voluntary sharing should be tried first. Most of them felt that government rationing was the only fair and convenient way. They thought that voluntary sharing could not be relied upon.

Meat Rationing:

12. The most important question on the minds of farm families was how will rationing apply to the many families who produce and butcher their own meat. There was a difference of opinion as to whether farmers who do their own butchering should be rationed. About half of those who do their own butchering felt that in order to be fair they should be rationed too. Almost all of the families interviewed did not see how rationing could be applied to families who butcher. Some families said that when they butcher they don't buy meat and take it from the consumers' market.

13. The families felt that people who do hard physical work (farmers, industrial workers and laborers) should be allowed more meat than office workers.
14. The homemakers thought that elderly people (65 and over) eat less meat and should get a smaller allowance unless they are engaged in active work.
15. They thought that adolescents need as much meat as adults but that younger children need less.
16. They thought that by all means enough meat should be provided for our armed forces.
17. The well-informed felt the same way about the meat supply for our allies but the less well-informed were not quite so willing. However, they supposed it had to be done.

Other Rationing:

18. The sugar rationing has worked out satisfactorily with some exceptions. Most of the homemakers had enough sugar or used alternatives. The allowances for canning were satisfactory except a few families who did a lot of baking did not get enough sugar. There was a feeling among farm people that some of the less well-informed were getting their full allotments of sugar even though they didn't use it and have not used this amount previous to rationing.
19. They have trouble getting coffee and would like to have it rationed, so that when they use gas to go to town they can be sure of getting their allowance of coffee. This same reason applied to some extent to meat.

Suggested Procedure for Getting Information as a Basis
for Neighborhood Leader Training on the "Share the Meat" Program.

1. Arrange to interview about eight farm families in each of two counties to obtain questions farm families ask and other information useful in training neighborhood leaders for the "Share the Meat" program. (Include some high and low income families; some who raise and butcher a large meat supply and some who buy meat. Select different types of families.)
2. Tell the farm families about the "Share the Meat" program.
Explain simply the why, what, and how of meat sharing. (For information on this see attached copies of "U.S. Government Campaign Share the Meat".)
3. Discuss the program with the families.
4. Note the questions farm families ask and other information which will be useful in preparing a training program for your neighborhood leaders.
5. It would be appreciated if you would send a summary of the questions farm families ask about the "Share the Meat" program, to the Washington office of the Extension Service.

PREPARED BY: Division of Field Studies and Training
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